

## **FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET**

**Meeting Date:** June 12, 2014

**Agenda Item:** Pine Grove Pond Fishing Access Site South Addition

**Division:** Fisheries

**Action Needed:** Endorsement to Proceed

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 5 minutes

### **Background**

In 2010, a 13-acre parcel was donated to FWP by a private party for development of the Pine Grove Pond FAS. In 2013, an additional 5.4 acre parcel to the west was also donated by the Whitefish Credit Union. This additional land provided access to the Whitefish River on the west side. This FAS has proved to be one of the most popular sites in FWP Region 1 receiving upwards of 30,000 angler days per year.

The south boundary of the FAS is bordered by three parcels owned by three individual landowners. Two of these landowners have expressed an interest in selling small acreages (2 and 2.26 acres) from their larger parcels. These smaller private parcels adjoin the FAS and are land locked between the FAS and the river. Adding these parcels to the FAS would not only provide access to the Whitefish River on the south where there is already parking and a vault latrine but it would also establish the river as a clear boundary between the FAS and private land. The addition would have the added benefit of protecting the natural setting and view at the FAS.

In addition to the two parcels of land on the south boundary of the FAS, a separate thirty foot strip of land on the northwest border of the FAS, adjacent to the parking area, is being offered by donation to FWP in order to accommodate overflow parking. Currently vehicles have been parking along the sides of the access road creating a safety hazard. The additional parking space would alleviate congestion and safety concerns.

### **Public Involvement Process & Results**

FWP has been in contact with the Flathead Land Trust who brought the two southern parcels to FWP's attention but there has been no public contact outside of that. There also has been no public involvement regarding the possible 30-foot donation. If the commission endorses this proposal to proceed, FWP will move ahead with its due diligence process that will include an environmental assessment and a 30-day public comment period.

### **Alternatives and Analysis**

Currently the only alternatives are to proceed or say no to this project. However, the possible benefits to the FAS warrant further review. If additional alternatives are realized during the due diligence process they will be discussed in the environmental assessment.

### **Agency Recommendation & Rationale**

FWP recommends that the commission endorse efforts to pursue the acquisition of two small parcels of land consisting of 2.0 and 2.26 acres and the possible donation of the 30 foot strip of land for additional parking. If negotiations are successful, the proposed acquisitions would be brought before the F&W Commission for final approval.

### **Proposed Motion**

I move that the Commission authorize FWP to pursue acquisition of the two small parcels of land bordering the south side of Pine Grove Pond FAS and the potential donation of additional land for parking.